

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Assistant Director for Operations
FROM : Assistant Director, Reports and Estimates
SUBJECT: Survey of Foreign Documents Branch, OO
Reference: Memorandum from Executive for A&M to the Asst. Director, OO,
dated 8 April 1948, Same Subject as Above.

DATE: APR 27 1948

1. Pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 2 of the 1st Indorsement to the referenced memorandum, this office has commented on the extract of the Administration and Management report in Enclosure #1.

2. With respect to the functional statement for the Foreign Documents Branch, this office prefers to withhold detailed comments pending completion of study and revision by the Office of Operations. It is recommended, however, that the functional statement include authority and provision for the Office of Operations to enter into contractual arrangements with outside agencies for purposes of increasing the volume of translation of foreign language documents, periodicals and press.

3. With the continued availability to CIA of current foreign language periodicals and press, there will arise a steady and increasing flow of requirements for their exploitation. ORE believes that every effort should be made to meet such requirements provided that they are based upon specific intelligence needs. It would appear that external arrangements could be made for the translation of unclassified material through an appropriate governmental channel in such manner as to conceal CIA's connection with the enterprise.

4. ORE further believes that OO and ORE could profit from joint consideration of requirements and planning for foreign document and periodical exploitation and would welcome such participation by the Office of Operations.



Survey of Foreign Documents Branch, OO

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ENCLOSURE #1

ORE COMMENTS ON EXTRACTS FROM THE A&M SURVEY OF FDB, CO

E.4.b. Analysis of Present Program.

- ✓ (1) ORE does not concur in the statement that the foreign periodical abstracts prepared by the Foreign Documents Branch are of marginal value. Such abstracts accomplish two main purposes for ORE. Namely: (a) they frequently meet total requirements of the researcher, and (b) they furnish a guide as to whether or not complete translation would be worth the effort. (If only ten per cent of the foreign periodical abstracts result in requests for further translation, it would appear that this device is well worth the effort.)
- ✓ (2) ORE regards the preparation of the intelligence catalogue cards as desirable for reference purposes.
- ✓ (3) ORE believes that the time factor can be materially reduced by effective ORE-CO liaison.
- ✓ (5) It would appear that ORE-CO collaboration on long-range requirements would remedy this situation.
- ✓ (6) ORE is required to evaluate the timeliness, accuracy and adequacy of available intelligence information for national intelligence purposes. It does not evaluate Foreign Documents Branch's effectiveness in translation. Consequently, a high proportion of unfavorable evaluations of FDB translated documents applies not to FDB but to the authors of the papers.
- ✓ (7) ORE's adequacy and timeliness ratings are based entirely upon the substantive content of the documents concerned, not with the rate of translation, nor with the FDB priority system. Such ratings are essential for proper utilization of the translated material by the researcher for intelligence purposes.

✓ E.4.c. Proposed Program. ORE believes that a long-range program for exploitation of foreign language documents would have material benefits to CIA, provided that:

- ✓ (1) It is prepared in close collaboration with ORE.
- ✓ (2) It would be flexible in concept so as to meet urgent requirements on a priority basis.
- ✓ (3) It would be responsive to established requirements and subject to periodic review by ORE and CO jointly.

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- ✓ (4) It would not apply to Russian language documents until such time as: (a) FDB Russian translation personnel have been increased, and (b) FDB is authorized to negotiate with external agencies for translation services on a contract basis.
- ✓ (5) It is confined initially to the systematic preparation of abstracts which indicate intelligence potential rather than complete translation without specific requests.

E.4.d. Advantages of Proposed Program.

- ✓ (1) Unless substantial increases to FDB personnel are contemplated, and unless the long-range compilation program is confined to surveying the intelligence potential of foreign language documents, through the medium of abstracts, FDB would be incurring the risk of unnecessary work, and simultaneously denying the researcher access to more urgently required material which may be out of phase with the "program". The objective of the FDB exploitation effort should not be the complete translation of all documents in its possession, but (a) the determination of the intelligence potential of its holdings through the medium of abstracts, and (b) the exploitation of its holdings only insofar as a contribution to the intelligence research effort results.
- ✓ E 4 d (9) (2) As previously stated, ORE will continue to evaluate the reports resulting from FDB exploitation on the basis of the accuracy, adequacy, and timeliness of their substantive content for national intelligence purposes. The distinction cited under paragraph E.4.d.(9) is without difference in this instance to ORE.